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Message Text

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51
ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SAJ-01 OMB-01 IO-14 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01

PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20 USIA-15 EURE-00 DRC-01 /117 W
---------- 059001
P 121740Z APR 74
FM AMEMBASSY ROME
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4326
INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE PRIORITY
AMCONSUL ZAGREB
AMCONSUL TRIESTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 5231

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, IT, YO
SUBJECT: ZONE B DISPUTE

REF: ROME 5158 AND 5088

1. WE ARE INFORMED BY FONOFF THAT CABINET REVIEWED GOI DRAFT REPLY TO YUGOSLAV NOTE OF MARCH 30 AND DECIDED ON SOME CHANGES, MAINLY INVOLVING NUANCES OF PHRASEOLOGY. SOME REFERENCE TO YUGOSLAV POINT QUESTIONING STATUS OF ZONE A IS STILL IN DRAFT. DRAFT IS BEING REWORKED IN FONOFF TODAY AND WILL BE RESUBMITTED TO CABINET FOR FINAL APPROVAL. OUR SOURCE IN FONOFF THOUGHT THAT, GIVEN ABSENCE OF YUGOSLAV AMBASSADOR AND OTHER FACTORS, THAT THERE WAS GOOD CHANCE THAT ITALIAN REPLY WOULD NOT BE DELIVERED UNTIL AFTER EASTER HOLIDAYS.

2. AT RECEPTION GIVEN BY FONOFF YUGOSLAV OFFICE DIRECTOR PIETROMARCHI PRIOR TO HIS POSTING NEXT WEEK TO CAIRO AS DCM, YUGOSLAV CHARGE BRZIC TOOK PESSIMISTIC VIEW AND VENTURED OPINION THAT THINGS WILL GET WORSE. HE INTERPRETED RETURN OF YUGOSLAV AMBASSADOR TO BELGRADE ON CONSULTATIONS AS BAD SIGN. HE SAID THAT ITALIANS HAD ASKED FOR BREATHING SPACE OF SEVERAL MONTHS BEFORE AGREEMENT TO BEGIN NEGOTIATIONS. BRZIC SAID THAT THIS WAS NOT
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ACCEPTABLE AS ANY LETUP IN YUGOSLAV PRESSURE WOULD BE REGARDED AS

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GIVING IN TO ITALIAN POSITION.

3. COMMENT: WE THINK YUGOSLAV CHARGE COMMENTS SHOULD BE TAKEN WITH GRAIN OF SALT, PARTICULARLY SINCE BELGRADE IS OBVIOUSLY INTERESTED IN PERSUADING USG TO BRING PRESSURE ON ITALIANS. AT SAME TIME, IT SEEMS CLEAR THAT YUGOSLAVS THEMSELVES BELIEVE THAT BEST STRATEGY IS TO KEEP ITALIANS' FEET TO THE FIRE. IN VIEW OF ITALIAN RECORD OF PROCRASTINATION ON THIS ISSUE, THERE WOULD APPEAR TO BE SOME MERIT IN THIS ARGUMENT UP TO A POINT. HOWEVER, POLICY OF UNREMITTING PRESSURE RUNS RISK OF DISPUTE BEING ESCALATED OUT OF CONTROL AND FORCES GOI TO TAKE UNYIELDING STAND LEST IT BE ACCUSED OF WEAKNESS. A PAUSE IN THE POLEMICS MIGHT BE JUST WHAT IS NEEDED AT THIS POINT, PARTICULARLY IF ACCOMPANIED BY FIRM ITALIAN ASSURANCE TO NEGOTIATE AFTER REASONABLE INTERLUDE. TO BE ACCEPTABLE AS BASIS FOR NEGOTIATIONS, ITALIANS WOULD ALSO PUSH TO HAVE CESSATION OF POLEMICS ACCOMPANIED BY INDICATION OF YUGOSLAV FLEXIBILITY REGARDING ITALIAN NEED FOR MINOR BORDER RECTIFICATIONS. VOLPE

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